

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the first paragraph on page 1 as follows:

Field of Invention

The present invention relates to novel hepatitis C virus ("HCV") protease inhibitors, pharmaceutical compositions containing one or more such inhibitors, methods of preparing such inhibitors and methods of using such inhibitors to treat hepatitis C and related disorders. This invention specifically discloses novel peptide compounds as inhibitors of the HCV NS3/NS4a serine protease. Priority for the invention is based on U.S. patent applications Serial Number 60/220,108 filed July 21, 2000, and Serial Number 09/908,955 filed July 19, 2001; the present invention is a continuation-in-part of Serial Number 09/908,955.